

PRESS RELEASE

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Illinois Department on Aging Announces 2017 Outstanding Caregiver Award Recipients

Awards highlight exceptional caregiving in five categories of service

Springfield – The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2017 Outstanding Caregiver Awards. Each year, the department recognizes a caregiver for their exceptional work in the categories of nursing facility, housing facility, home health services, Older American Act services and Community Care Program services.

“Each year we receive an outpouring of nominees from the community highlighting many remarkable caregivers across the State. It’s never an easy task determining eventual winners, but I believe these five individuals truly deserve honor and recognition for the work they do,” commented IDoA Director, Jean Bohnhoff. “Their exceptional work not only demonstrates their dedication, devotion, and commitment to helping others, but has also touched and continues to touch, the lives of countless residents across the state,” she continued.

The Outstanding Caregiver distinction is awarded to caregivers in five categories who have been exceptional in their service to their clients. The five categories for Outstanding Caregiver are housing facility, nursing facility, home health services, Community Care Program services and Older American Act services.

The 2017 Outstanding Caregiver Award recipients are:

Mary Sensenig of Amboy, IL—Mary Sensenig is the recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Caregiver Award for a Nursing Facility. Mary became a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at Aperion Care Amboy in 1975 and has served in the facility for 41 years. She constantly exceeds her duties as a CNA by decorating resident’s rooms every holiday and raising funds for various resident events and activities. Recently, Mary helped the Amboy facility remodel their back patio and install a new sidewalk for their residents through her outstanding fundraising efforts.

Sherry Roper of Pekin, IL—Sherry Roper is the recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Caregiver Award for a Housing Facility. She is a housekeeper at John Evans Supporting Living Community and, at 66 years old, is often described as having the “enthusiasm and spirit of someone half her age.” She has a contagious, cheerful and caring nature that effortlessly spreads throughout the facility. Sherry finds joy in paying special attention to residents, frequently making them crafts and taking special care of meaningful items they have.

Cheri Stoneburner of McHenry, IL—Cheri Stoneburner is the recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Caregiver Award for Home Health Services. Cheri has been a nurse for over 44 years and has worked for more than 28 years in the McHenry County community, 22 of which have been at Centegra Home Health. During her time there, Cheri has helped numerous residents, one of whom she has helped live at home for over 20 years.

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Michael Welch of Chicago, IL—Michael Welch is the recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Caregiver Award for Older American Act services. He has been serving as a Title IIIB Chore Housekeeping Employee at Catholic Charities Northwest Services since 2013. Michael is very kind and patient and always willing to listen to his clients. He always goes above and beyond to help others and has built countless of meaningful relationships with the people he has worked with throughout his career.

Shirley Ferrell of Swansea, IL—Shirley Ferrell is the recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Caregiver Award for Community Care Program services. Shirley currently works for Help at Home at Southwestern Illinois Visiting Nurse Association and is described as “a worker patient’s look forward to having in their home, knowing they will receive excellent care.” She once helped a patient afflicted with serious medical issues go to the doctor and undergo extensive treatment, most likely saving his life in the process.

“We are humbled by the extraordinary service these caregivers provide,” said Director Bohnhoff. “They are the embodiment of the commitment and compassion that every caregiver should be and we are incredibly grateful for their service.”

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About the Illinois Department on Aging

The Department’s mission is to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity and quality of life. For more information, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (or TTY for the hearing impaired at 1-888-206-1327), or log on to the website at www.illinois.gov/aging